

THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

"TO CARE FOR HIM WHO HAS BORN THE BATTLE, AND FOR HIS WIDOW AND ORPHANS."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

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THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

The National Tribune.

"THE VALIDITY OF THE PUBLIC DEBT OF THE UNITED STATES, AUTHORIZED BY LAW, INCLUDING DEBTS INCURRED FOR PAYMENT OF PENSIONS AND BOUNTIES FOR SERVICES IN SUPPRESSING INSURRECTION OR REBELLION, SHALL NOT BE QUESTIONED."—SEC. 4, ART. XIV. CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES.

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WASHINGTON, D. C., DECEMBER 31, 1881.

DURING the period commencing August 20 and ending December 24, both dates inclusive, we have issued and mailed 341,500 copies of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

THE Battle of Stone River was fought December 31, 1862—nineteen years ago.

THOSE desiring the continuation of the series of articles upon the battle of Stone River, begun in this number, should send in their subscriptions without delay.

ANDREW JACKSON once said "The Union must and shall be preserved."

Commissioner of Pensions Dudley says the good name and fame of his comrades in the late war must and shall be protected. He will not allow wholesale and baseless charges of fraud made against pensioners and claimants before his office to go uncontradicted.

ONE-TENTH of one per cent. of fraudulent pension claims is rather a small nest-egg from which to hatch such a brood of lies as the New York Herald has been parading before the public for the last few months.

THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE takes especial pleasure in calling attention to the New York Herald's interview with Commissioner Dudley, published elsewhere. Colonel Dudley's statements are in entire harmony with those heretofore made by us in reply to the Herald's malicious slanders of our disabled veterans and the helpless widows and orphans of our fallen comrades.

OUR object in sending out sample copies is to bring in subscriptions. We are satisfied that every ex-soldier who examines a copy of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE will desire to have it regularly, and hence take this method of bringing our paper to the notice of all.

AFTER General Dudley's full, fair, and authoritative exposition of the affairs of his office, as made to a correspondent of the New York Herald, any paper that renews the charges of wholesale frauds in connection with pensions must necessarily be guilty of willfully and maliciously slandering the entire soldier element of the country.

Important Notice.

Desiring to extend the usefulness of our paper to the widest possible extent, and in order that no ex-soldier or other person interested in matters growing out of the war of the rebellion may have reasonable excuse for not taking it, we have concluded to fix the subscription price, until March 31, 1882, at one dollar per annum.

Those who have heretofore sent one dollar and fifty cents for a single subscription, by sending half a dollar more with an additional name and address, will be granted an additional copy, thus bringing their individual subscription down to one dollar for fifty-two numbers. Those wishing to become subscribers, should, in view of the above offer, send on their one dollar at once, and those who have already sent one dollar and fifty cents, should, without delay, remit the remaining half dollar with another subscriber before the new year commences.

COMMISSIONER DUDLEY has pricked the pension frauds bubble with which the New York Herald, Post, Tribune, Times, and other journals of the country have been playing for some time past.

Subscribe for THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, the best Soldiers' paper in the country.

Plain Language.

THERE were sneaks in the army during the war of the rebellion as there were out of it. There were men who disgraced the uniform they wore just the same as there were men who disgraced their manhood at home by resorting to every subterfuge in order to escape serving the country that gave protection to themselves and property. There were so-called soldiers at the front who deserted their colors, and there were self-styled patriots at the rear who skipped to Canada to avoid the draft, or purchased high-priced substitutes as a means of preserving their own precious carcasses from the chance impact of rebel bullets or pieces of shells. But, because there were scoundrels at home, we, who were soldiers, do not pretend to say that all who did not enlist belonged to that class; nor should the loud-mouthed patriots of to-day, who never sacrificed aught for their country, although abundant opportunity was offered them in 1861-5, insist, that because some who entered the service of the Union were unworthy, all must have been unworthy. And yet, this is substantially what many of them are now doing. To read their utterances in the papers of the day, a stranger to the facts would suppose that the United States owe their present prosperity—their existence as a nation, even, to an army made up of thieves, perjurers, swindlers, and fraudulent characters generally.

Our copperhead friends abused us roundly while we were at the front fighting for the Nation's life—they called us mercenary hirelings, "nigger worshipers," and this, whether we voted with one political party or the other; and now, the same sorry lot, under new names, are vilifying us again. And in this fight there is no politics. We, as soldiers, were neither Republicans nor Democrats—we were Unionists; and to-day, as ex-soldiers, we remain the same. We recognize no party that does not accept fully the principles for which we fought; nor do we turn away from any man, Democrat or Republican, who fought with us. But as for the carpers, who cannot distinguish between a whistling bullet and a June bug, or between the smell of gunpowder and sauer-kraut, we have no use for them—we despise them more heartily than we do any other class of citizens—more than we despise any one of God's creatures, except that chiefest of sinners in the Nation's eyes—Guiteau.

The Battle of Stone River.

The article on Stone River, commenced in this number, is a chapter from Colonel G. C. Kniffin's forthcoming history of "Kentucky in the War," kindly furnished by him to the readers of THE TRIBUNE. The incidents referred to will be recalled by thousands of our readers who were participants in the scenes described. THE TRIBUNE of next week will take up the thread of the narrative that memorable Christmas day in 1862 when the magnificent Army of the Cumberland, 50,000 strong, filed out from their encampment and took up the line of march to Murfreesboro, and will end with the alignment of both the Union and confederate armies by brigades on the historic field of Stone River. The battle will be described in the succeeding number.

The story of that desperate engagement has never been related from the standpoint of Colonel Kniffin. His familiarity with the most minute details connected with the maneuvering of both armies evinces close study of Union and confederate archives, and his presence upon the field on the staff of a corps commander enables him to describe with remarkable accuracy the strategical positions upon the field.

The evident candor with which he regards the actions on both sides of the stage, his delineation of the salient points in the character of each, and his reference to former events in which they have participated, will create a desire to see the remainder of a work to which the author is devoting years of patient research. Nineteen years have passed away since the two armies of Rosecrans and Bragg met at Stone River in the shock of battle, but the memory of the hope which dawned upon our country with the New Year, when the night of doubt was banished by the announcement of victory, will never pass away.

His Present Opinion.

HON. Goldsmith W. Hewitt, of Alabama, who introduced into the present Congress a bill to repeal the Arrears of Pension law, in an interview with a correspondent of the New York Herald recently, said:

"Arrears of pensions are a mere gratuity, and the law granting them can be at any time altered or repealed altogether."

In the 45th Congress, 2d session, the same honorable gentleman made a report (No. 64) from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, in which he used the following language: "The pensions of soldiers disabled in the line of duty are in no sense a gratuity, but are supported by contract made by the Government with them at the date of their enlistment, that if disabled they should have a pension."

Now, in our opinion, arrears are simply a part of the original pension due the soldier under contract, and wrongfully withheld by the Government. No other reasonable view of the matter can be taken and sustained. Mr. Hewitt's desire to distinguish himself has evidently led him astray.

We trust he will find himself in time to save his reputation as a lawyer and just-minded man, which now depends upon his present construction of Report No. 64 referred to above, which is published in full in another column.

The House Chaplain.

A VALUED friend writes us, taking exception to a paragraph or two which appeared in a recent number of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, because in them we seemed to reflect rather severely upon the newly-elected Chaplain of the House of Representatives. Ordinarily we should take no notice of such a communication, but out of regard to our present correspondent we take occasion to refer to were directed solely to the man, not against the religion he professes or church he represents.

Second, They were prompted chiefly by the following language employed by him in a sermon delivered in his church in this city shortly after the assassination of President Garfield, viz.: "Had there been no Stalwart contest against the prerogatives of the Executive, there would have been no such assault on the President's life."

His whole sermon was teeming with similar bitter denunciations of men, including our present Chief Magistrate, President Arthur, and delivered as it was, and when it was, proved to every thoughtful mind that its author was more fitted to fan the flames of discord than to heal strife. In our view it is the duty of a minister of the Gospel to follow the teachings of Christ—to invoke peace—to counsel, to warn against, not to point out new ways of doing evil. There was a suggestiveness in the sermon calculated to induce others to commit crimes similar to the one he so vigorously condemned.

His inexperienced youth may have had something to do with his ill-advised utterances; but for this we must make allowance. We censured him and must continue to do so; but from our knowledge of the Christian Church and of its great and noble-hearted founder, we are satisfied that the doctrines promulgated so unwisely by this one of its disciples have no approval outside of his own heart, and perhaps even his conscience now accuses him; therefore, we will let the matter rest, so far as we are concerned.

The Mississippi Plan.

NEVADA has followed Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, and Wisconsin by adopting the Mississippi Plan. A mob recently hung a man accused of crime in the State first mentioned without the intervention of judge or jury.

THE case fairly stated: Colonel Dudley to the New York Herald's correspondent.

NOW THAT Commissioner Dudley has authoritatively denied the New York Herald's allegations of fraud in the Pension Office, that mendacious sheet will have to search for some new scheme by which to keep up its circulation. Perhaps its editor will let loose again the menagerie of wild animals in Central Park.

MR. HOOKER, of Mississippi, who entered the rebel army in 1861 and served against the Union during the war of the rebellion, has introduced a bill to prevent frauds in the Pension Bureau and to require stated publications of lists of pensioners of the Government.

OUR soldier friends will note the fact that Mr. Hooker's name cannot, in any event, appear in such a list, if published.

COMMISSIONER OF PENSIONS DUDLEY has instilled some pertinent facts into the mind of the New York Herald's correspondent. We wonder if the Herald will continue its cry of fraud, now that the truth has been brought forcibly home to its editorial chief?

REGULAR subscribers who receive extra copies of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE will please distribute them among their soldier friends.

BEFORE Congress introduces measures to "prevent frauds" in the Pension Office, we suggest that it might be well to first ascertain whether any and what frauds exist there.

READ the New York Herald's interview with Colonel Dudley, Commissioner of Pensions.

WE think the Herald will now have to take water on the pension fraud question.

NOW LET the New York Herald apologize to the Union ex-soldiers and cease lying about them.

PROMOTION IN THE ARMY.

General Terry makes some pertinent observations on the question of retirement and promotion in the army. He thinks that in the Regular army retirement should be obligatory, as it is in the navy. In other words, when gentlemen reach a certain age—say 62, which is the time assigned to admirals and other naval officers for retirement from active service—they should go upon the retired list. His reason for this is that the keeping of old officers on the active list retards promotion, and that without a constant flow of promotion there is no opportunity for young men to come to the front.

That republics can be grateful is shown by the issuance to-day over Secretary Kirkwood's signature of twenty-seven pieces of bounty-land scrip to the heirs of John Paul Jones, a captain in the American Navy, in appreciative acknowledgment of brave and meritorious services in connection with the capture of certain British vessels of war.—Critic.

If it takes one hundred years to be grateful, as in the case of John Paul Jones, we wonder how long it will be before our Republic's gratitude for the soldiers and sailors of 1861 begins to manifest itself in a similar manner?

THE price of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE is reduced, until March 31st, 1882, to One Dollar per annum.

THE UNFINISHED SHAFT.

THE Washington Monument Commission, of which President Arthur is president *ex officio*, met in the library of the Executive Mansion last week. All the members of the commission were present, including W. W. Corcoran, Supervising Architect Hill, Architect Clark, of the Capitol extension, and General Wright, Chief of Engineers, United States Army. Mr. Corcoran occupied the chair. The annual report of Colonel T. L. Casey, United States Army, engineer in charge of the work on the monument, showed that the monument had now reached the height of 250 feet above its base; that during the year 74 feet were added, and involved the cutting and setting of 1,184 blocks of marble, containing 4,224 cubic feet of material, and 13,481 blocks of granite, containing 44,349 cubic feet. The total height added to the structure since the 7th of August, 1880, when the work of building was commenced, is 100 feet. Since the completion of the foundation, on the 29th of May, 1880, the total weight added to the load then upon it has been 22,353 tons. The commission approve and recommend the estimate of \$200,000 for continuing the work on the monument for the year ending June 30, 1883. The attention of Congress is specially invited to the necessity of granting this appropriation early in the session, in order that the work may not suffer a delay covering three-quarters of the coming season. That the monument may be finished as soon as practicable there should be no interruption in the progress of the construction.

AMERICAN MERCHANT VESSELS.

A casual glance at the shipping lists in the New York papers shows the great preponderance of foreign over American vessels; it is proved, indeed, by statistics that only 19 per cent. of the foreign trade of the United States is carried in American bottoms. Public writers in this country have such a belief in the utter righteousness of free trade that they attribute the startling decline in the mercantile marine of our country to their protectionist heresies. We doubt this. The most flourishing part of the American merchant navy is that which is engaged in the coasting trade, and which is vigorously protected; and this trade is of no small importance, seeing that the trip around the Horn from the Atlantic to the California ports is officially regarded as "coasting." We rather incline to the belief that the falling off in American vessels was greatly due to the depredations of the confederate privateers. Numbers of ships were then transferred to foreign flags, and the trade has since followed these flags. But there are deeper causes than this. The Americans have gradually shifted westward. They have become a more inland people. The New Englanders, once among the hardest and most skillful sailors in the world, have either gone west or have taken to running mills and factories, and the substitution of iron for wood in shipbuilding has given "the pull" to Old England, who used to import her wood, but grows her own iron, and grows it better and cheaper than any other country. The thorough rehabilitation of the war navy, which President Arthur recommends, will be rendered a more difficult task from the want of a commercial navy whence a supply of bold and experienced seamen can be drawn.—London Graphic.

A GREAT BELL.

A great bell for St. Paul's Cathedral, in London, was recently cast in Leicestershire. It will take its place as one of the heaviest bells in Europe, being about 17½ tons in weight. This mass of metal, consisting of pure tin and copper, was about 8½ hours in course of melting, and it was four minutes in running into the mould. To guard against accidents the cast-iron case for the latter was made strong enough to bear a pressure of 200 tons. There was great anxiety when the case was being taken to pieces, the clay mould broken up, and the mighty bell bit by bit exposed to view. The casting, however, appeared to be smooth and delicate in surface and outline. Its "skin," as the outward covering is technically called, showed no flaw of any kind whatever. The bell is 8 feet 10 inches high and 9 feet 6½ inches in diameter, while the thickness of the middle of the sound bow is 8½ inches. The cost, when rigged in the tower, will be about £3,000. It will be used for the first time next Easter Sunday.

A CURIOUS COMPLICATION.

On the 30th day of last June a clerk in the Treasury Department resigned his position in consequence of ill-health, on condition that his wife should take his place. Nearly all the New York delegation, from which State the gentleman hailed and was credited, joined in the request, and it was done. His wife, however, was, curiously enough, credited to Kentucky by Assistant Secretary Upton. In September last the wife left her husband. The husband is now in better health and wants to get his place back, but cannot. He has two small children by his first wife, who was a sister of the present wife. The Department is in a quandary as to how this question, in all its bearings, should be settled.

COL. DUDLEY VS. THE N. Y. "HERALD."

THE New York Herald's regular correspondent in this city has recently interviewed Commissioner Dudley in regard to frauds in the Pension Office. In view of what we have already said upon the same subject, we publish the result of the interview as given by the Herald, to show that THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE was warranted in taking up the cudgel in behalf of the soldiers, and laying it over the Herald's editorial head. The Herald correspondent says:

The Arrears of Pension bill, which was rushed through Congress in the concluding days of the session of 1879 and was signed by Mr. Hayes against the protest, it is said, of many persons who had given the subject earnest attention, provided that all persons entitled to pensions on account of death or disability in the service of the United States during the war of the rebellion and who should file their claims prior to July 1, 1880, should be paid the arrears of pension at the rate allowed to each, commencing from the date of the death or discharge from the service of the person on whose account the claim is allowed. On valid claims filed after July 1, 1880, no arrears are to be paid; the pension beginning change was made in existing laws. Before the passage of this act only such persons who had filed valid claims within five years after the date of disability or the time that the right accrued were entitled to arrears; if filed after the five years the pension began from the date of the final evidence filed in the case.

In his last report Commissioner Dudley says that

789,060 original claims have been filed, of which 450,949 have been allowed and inscribed on the pension roll. Under the Arrears of Pension law 227,040 original pension claims had been filed prior to July 1, 1880, and he estimates that 193,000 of these claims will be allowed and entitled to arrears. The average amount of arrears he estimates at \$1,350 for each person, and, after deducting \$15,000,000 as the probable amount due to persons who should be before their claims are allowed, leaving no heirs under the law entitled to succeed to the pension, he thinks \$255,000,000 will be needed for first payments under the arrears act. The regular pension list will also, of course, be increased, corresponding to the admission of these 193,000 applicants, and to the admission of those whose claims, filed subsequent to July 1, 1880, shall be allowed. The present annual pension list amounts in round figures to \$28,000,000. In six years, within which the Commissioner hopes to adjudicate upon all the claims now pending, it will amount to say \$46,000,000. But claims are still coming in at the rate of nearly three thousand a month, and it is difficult to say what the list will amount to twelve years hence. To-day, after seventy years, there are 1,232 claims pending on account of the war of 1812. Last year ninety-five original claims were filed on account of that war. Commissioner Dudley thinks, however, that enough will be annually dropped from the rolls to compensate for those admitted, and that the annual pension list, after the arrears are paid, will never be over \$50,000,000.

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST FRAUD.

In conversation with a Herald correspondent Commissioner Dudley went over the facts which, in his opinion, reduce frauds on the pension list to a very small proportion. It is his opinion that the proportion is not over one-tenth of one per cent. He explained that of the total amount of claims heretofore filed and passed upon thirteen per cent. have been rejected. Of those now pending he estimates that fifteen per cent. will be rejected. The precautions against fraud, he says, are extraordinary—far more so than the public generally realizes. The applicant for a pension must in the first place furnish the Commissioner with a full description of himself and of his wound or malady. He must state the time of his enlistment, the date and number of his company and regiment, the date and circumstances of his wound or disability, the history and date of his treatment in hospital or elsewhere, and the general record of his service. He must secure the affidavit of a commissioned officer of his company or regiment that his statements are true, or else of two of his comrades. The comrades must also furnish the record of their own service, so that the Commissioner may verify their opportunities of knowing how and when the disability occurred. The records of the War Department are then referred to for verification of all the statements made. The records of the Surgeon-General's Office are expected to correspond with the assertions of the applicant as to the date of the wound or disability and his treatment in hospital or elsewhere. If, as sometimes happens, the records conflict with his statements or do not corroborate them—mistakes doubtless occurred in the tremendous total of these records—the applicant must furnish an overwhelming array of testimony from his fellow-soldiers or others to substantiate his assertions. The applicant must be examined by a regularly appointed surgeon of the Pension Office, or if that is not possible, the affidavit of his family physician must be presented that his disability was caused by and directly due to services in the war. Even after he has proved to the entire satisfaction of the office that he is entitled to a pension and his name is placed upon the roll, the Commissioner, upon a bare suspicion of fraud, can suspend payment of his pension. The Commissioner has the power, and always exercises it upon a hint of fraud, to send a special agent to investigate the facts. He can order any number, and at any time, of special examinations by a regular surgeon or a Board of Surgeons of the Pension Office. If he is convinced by the proof submitted on investigation that there has been any fraud or even misrepresentation he can strike the name of the pensioner from the rolls. His power in this respect is absolute. These, he says, are the main points only of the precautions against fraud provided by law, and only as to the application of the survivor himself. In the case of a widow, or of a child under sixteen—after which age children are not entitled to the benefits of a pension, the right of a widow terminating when she marries again—the provisions of the law are much more stringent.

CLAIM AGENTS.

As to claim agents, Commissioner Dudley says, that by law, since June 20, 1878, they are entitled to a fee of only \$10 in each case; no matter what is the extent of their labor, they cannot recover a cent more. If a special contract, made prior to June 20, 1878, has been entered into between himself and the applicant, it must be submitted to the Commissioner for approval or rejection, and in no case has the fee under such a contract exceeded \$25 during my administration of the office. If the application is rejected, the agent is entitled to no fee whatever. He not only cannot recover in any case, a fee larger than \$10, except in the case of a special contract formally approved by the Commissioner, but he is especially prohibited by law from holding any lien whatever upon the pension. Upon information that he has demanded or received a larger fee, he can be disbarred from practice before the courts, and the Secretary of the Interior, even upon suspicion, can, at any time, revoke his permission to appear before the Pension Bureau, and can forbid his acting as a pension claim agent. Upon suspicion that he has secured a claim fraudulently, witnesses can be subpoenaed to appear before any court in any State or Territory, and penalties are provided for their failure to appear or their refusal to testify. The Commissioner is of the opinion that if the cases adjudicated and passed upon by the bureau were submitted to men versed in law and accustomed to weigh evidence and pass judicially upon testimony, they would say that, under the powers given, the adjudications of the Pension Office are as judicial in their character, and would compare favorably with those of any other judicial tribunal in the land. He says, if Congress would grant an appropriation that would enable him to send agents of experience in weighing testimony, of legal knowledge sufficient to scrutinize the evidence offered, and to form an intelligent opinion as to the credibility of witnesses, as also to extract from them the truth of their statements by cross-examination, fraud upon the pension list would be practically eliminated. It is his opinion that the reason for the long delay on the part of persons entitled to pensions in filing their claims, has been chiefly due to pride, or, in many instances, to the fact that they had not needed the assistance. When the arrears bill, however, was passed, enabling them to secure a considerable sum at once, they presented their just claims to the Government. Doubtless, he thinks, many of the claims filed were by ex-soldiers, formerly well to do, but who had been reduced in fortune.

It may be explained here that the widow or child cannot recover arrears unless the claim of the husband or father was filed prior to his death. The law provides, also, that arrears, in case of the death of the applicant before the claim is allowed, and of the widow, child—under sixteen years of age—or other dependent entitled to the pension, cannot be recovered by any other person. The Commissioner estimates that \$15,000,000 will never be called for, for this reason, out of the amount which would now be necessary to pay valid claims for arrears.

A PLEASING CHRISTMAS INCIDENT.

Since the meeting of Congress in December Hon. David Davis, president pro tem. of the Senate, has been in the habit of purchasing papers from a ragged little newsboy who sells them about the Capitol. On Saturday last, when the boy came with his papers, the Senator called a messenger and directed him to go down into the city and purchase him a new outfit from cap to boots, which was done. He then took the boy to the barber shop and directed the barber to cut his hair and give him a bath. When this was done he took the boy to his room and gave him some good fatherly advice, sending him away with an additional present in the way of a small coin to spend Christmas. When the boy returned to his mother he was scarcely recognized in his metamorphosis. The story leaked out through the barber, to the great disgust of the distinguished gentleman, who, as a friend remarked when this incident was related to him, "is constantly doing that sort of thing."